



CA-11 DMAT



Sacramento Disaster Medical Assistance Team

August
2001

WHAT IS A DISASTER MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM (DMAT)? *Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMATs) are a group of professional and paraprofessional medical personnel (supported by a cadre of logistical and administrative staff) designed to provide emergency medical care during a disaster or other event. DMATs are a community resource available to support local, regional, and State requirements. However, as a National resource they can be Federalized to provide interstate aid. DMATs deploy to disaster sites with sufficient supplies and equipment to sustain themselves for a period of 72 hours. DMATs may provide primary health care and/or may serve to augment overloaded local health care systems.*

CA-11 started developmental efforts in January of 2001. This unit will be the sixth DMAT team in the State of California. Other teams are located in the San Francisco Bay Area, San Diego, Los Angeles, Orange County, and San Bernardino. California teams have responded to disasters throughout the United States and U.S. Territories: earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, airplane crashes, etc. Teams also participate in special events such as Presidential inaugurations, the Olympics and Special Olympics, National Conventions, etc. Physicians, NPs, PAs, RNs, Paramedics, EMTs, and various non-medical logistics and support personnel are now being recruited for CA-11. For more information about team membership, contact Anne Bybee or Ken Martzen at the California EMS Authority: (916) 322-4336.



A Recent Team Exercise, See Page 2 for Details

DMATs Participate in Events such as Presidential Inaugurations, the Olympics, National Conventions, etc.

Summer/Fall Meeting Schedule

August 16, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. General Meeting

September 19, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. General Meeting

October 18, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. General Meeting

Location and directions to general meetings:
3329 Fitzgerald Road #4, Rancho Cordova.
From Highway 50 take Sunrise Blvd. South. Turn left on White Rock Road (major intersection). At first stop sign, turn right onto Fitzgerald Road. Go approximately ½ mile (you will see construction area on left) and turn left into “warehouse” units – number 3329 is set back in from the street, and unit #4 is directly below the building number.

CA-11 Members Deploy on Training Exercise

By Anne M. Bybee

21 members of CA-11 DMAT joined approximately 40 from the San Francisco Bay Area (CA-6) team at Camp Parks, California, to provide medical coverage at the annual brush fire training exercise on July 18 and 19, 2001. The event allows fire departments from throughout the Bay Area to send crews to practice brush fire fighting techniques. The base benefits by having all brush burned, thus avoiding threatening fires. CA-6 has attended for the past three years, providing very valuable medical support for primarily minor problems: eye washes, ankle sprains, minor burns, bee stings, etc. The team is also prepared and trained to provide initial stabilization for major injuries or illnesses.



CA-6 and CA-11 Join Efforts

While this year's event only had one patient delivered to the base camp medical facility (a firefighter who became ill as a result of low blood sugar levels), others were treated and released at the three branch facilities. These branch facilities corresponded with the fire strike teams, located less than one mile each from the base camp.

The main focus for DMAT members was training in field living skills (learning how to put up the Western Shelter tents, the shower/sink facilities, etc.) and practical application of the Incident Command System.

Doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, PAs, Paramedics, and EMTs worked side by side with other logistical support personnel to build a site that consisted of three lodging tents, one medical treatment facility, and one command tent. Weather for the event was mild (for Sacramento area

residents), and the living conditions were fine. Team members were treated to MREs (military meals, the latest version of "sea rations").

Participants from CA-11 were: **Anne Bybee, John Chapman, Cary Chavez, Jon Defenbaugh, Wade Griffith, Virginia Hass, Carolyn Hellerstein, Karen Kastle, Oleg Klepach, Sheila Martin, Ken Martzen, James McLaughlin, Kelly Moore, Shannon Parrish, Shaun Partlow, Jim Rich, Jim Sachs, Dan Smiley, Clarence Teem, and Gordon Worley.** Dan Smiley acted as the CA-11 unit commander, and the full exercise was under the command of David Lipin from CA-6.

Both teams agreed that training together was both enjoyable and mutually beneficial. We plan to have an event in the near future hosted by CA-11, where CA-6 members will be invited guests. Long-range plans include a continuation of these shared experiences here in Northern California.

CA-11 extends a sincere appreciation to our friends in CA-6 for a wonderful experience!

Common Terms You May Encounter

Staging area - where incoming equipment and personnel report to before being dispatched to the fire line. Usually located one to three miles from the fire line.

Fire (or base) camp - can house up to 1,000 people "some distance from the fire zone."

Extended Attack Fire - is expected to last 24 to 48 hours.

PFS - personal fire shelter, like a small aluminum pup tent. The PFS is used for burn over situations, as a last resort, when no escape routes are available.

Fire storms - like a tornado on the fire line. Temperatures in a fire storm may reach 4,000 degrees F. The swirling winds may reach 100 mph. A fire storm may come up in an instant, and can travel at 20 to 25 miles an hour.

LESA: At or near the fire line, use *Lookouts*, look for *Escape* routes, and note *Safety Areas* (burnt over areas).

Introduction to Wildlands Fire Area Safety

By Jim Rich, member, CA-11 (a Communications Specialist volunteer to CDF since 1988)

Issued Gear: Fire protective gear that should be given to all those (including DMAT medical team members) going to or near a wildlands fire line or fire area: Nomex fire-resistant pants, shirt, helmet, and a Personal Fire Shelter.

Personal Gear (to be worn with your issued gear): 100 percent cotton light pants and long-sleeved T-shirt, goggles, neckerchief, sturdy high-topped leather boots, plastic water bottle, leather gloves, loud whistle.

New CDF Policy: There is now much more restrictive fire line access for CDF volunteers and support personnel. CDF officials want only well-trained, well-equipped, physically fit individuals at the fire line.

General Safety Guidelines: If your vehicle is overcome by a brush or forest fire, it is usually safer to stay inside the vehicle than to get out and attempt to outrun the fire. Communications are critical to safety at or near wildlands fires. "There is no place at the fire line for dead batteries."

Always be alert at or near the fire line, in staging areas, and at fire camps. Watch out for moving vehicles and equipment.

Summary: Finally, remember the Storm King Mountain Fire: In July 1994, 14 fire fighters were killed when they were overrun by a fire storm while fighting a forest fire. Afterwards, some observers claimed that some of the above ten standards were broken, or at least bent. Under the Incident Command System, the overall responsibility for the safety of personnel responding to an incident, such as a

CDF Firelines

California DMAT teams continue to negotiate with CDF to provide medical coverage at firelines throughout the State. More information will be provided at upcoming CA-11 team meetings.

wildlands fire, rests with the Incident Commander, and his or her Safety Officer. However, the direct responsibility for your safety at an incident usually rests with you and your immediate supervisor.

The Ten Standards for Wildlands Fire Safety

Many of the following standards for safe wildlands fire fighting can be applied, with only slight modifications, to the business of providing emergency first aid and primary medical care to wildlands fire fighters:

1. Fight fires aggressively, but provide for safety first.
2. Initiate all actions based on current and expected fire behavior.
3. Recognize current weather conditions and obtain forecasts.
4. Ensure instructions are given and understood.
5. Obtain current information on fire status.
6. Remain in communication with crew members, your supervisor, and adjoining forces.
7. Determine safety zones and escape routes.
8. Establish lookouts in potentially hazardous situations.
9. Retain control at all times.
10. Stay alert, keep calm, think clearly, and act decisively.

For more information on these ten standards, visit this Web Page:

Note: This information is no substitute for an official CDF fire safety course.

Time for Leaders to Step Forward!

The bylaws for CA-11 DMAT team organization and structure have been drafted by the initial “management group”, and are being put to the membership vote in August. The next phase of development critical to this team is the election of officers and appointment of key positions. Each member comes to the team with certain skills and knowledge; many come with leadership abilities and experience. While the commitment is greater for officers of any organization, so are the benefits. There is no better time to get involved with the leadership of CA-11; opportunities to participate in the team structure and design are abundant! Elections will be held at the September 18th meeting.



CA-11 Sets up a Western Shelter Tent, See Page 2 for Details

Membership copies of the bylaws will show responsibilities for the following Board positions:

President (Chief Executive Officer)
Unit Commander (Medical)
Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer (Finance Chief)

Plans Chief
Operations Chief
Logistics Chief
Public Information Officer

Membership Officer
Training Officer
Administrative Officer
Safety Officer

There are also key roles within the NDMS System* (for field deployment command structure), in addition to the medical positions, such as:

Deputy Unit Commander
Communications Officer

Administrative Specialist
Equipment Specialist

Security Specialist

Over the next few months we will discuss these positions in greater detail at team meetings. It is important to know that an individual can hold more than one position – perhaps one Board position, a different role for field deployments, and possibly even a third position alternating medical functions with command functions. For example, an individual certified as an RN can be elected to the Board as the Training Officer. For deployments, this individual could be used in a medical capacity as an RN, or they could function as a Deputy Unit Commander, a Communications Officer, a Security Specialist, or an Equipment Specialist. As we gain more experience as a team it will become evident that certain people will excel in specific roles. In getting established as members of NDMS – and in preparing all of the paperwork that must be submitted - EMSA (sponsor of CA-11) has applied the NDMS job positions to all applicants, matching backgrounds and experience. These, too, can be changed as individuals grow in interest or experience with the team.

We are challenging all members to strongly consider Board positions and/or other leadership positions as listed above. Come prepared to place your name on the ballot on September 18th; you will be provided an opportunity to address the membership and briefly discuss your qualifications.

Newsletter Designed by: Robert S. Newsad

CA-11 is sponsored by the California EMS Authority, 1930-9th St. Sacramento, CA 95814
Visit www.emsa.ca.gov for more information